

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ON-SITE REVIEWS

(School Meal Service Accountability Review)

The individual school's counting and claiming procedures must be reviewed yearly prior to February 1. Additional review of the food service program is optional, but encouraged by the State Agency.

IF ANY OF THE QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERED "NO", A CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN IS MANDATORY AND A DATE MUST BE SPECIFIED FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN ALONG WITH CONFIRMATION THAT THE CORRECTIVE ACTION HAS BEEN COMPLETED CORRECTLY.

Question #1a - The system must provide a meal count at the point of service. The point of service count is used to determine the school's claim for reimbursement. Point of service means that point in the food service operation where a determination can accurately be made that a reimbursable free, reduced-price or paid lunch has been served to an eligible child. The person counting the meals by category must be able to determine that each student has a reimbursable meal and is claimed in the correct category. To complete this question, visit each building during the meal service to determine that the school is using a system that provides a meal count at the point of service.

Question #1b, 1c and 1d - The system must provide a meal count by type (free, reduced-price and paid), of reimbursable meals, and on a daily basis. There are different ways to count meals served by category each day. Some of the most common: roster, ticket, cash register, and a scanner at the point of service. Your procedure must ensure that meals counted: (1) meet the meal pattern requirements, (2) are served to eligible students, and (3) are totaled daily by category.

Question #2 - The system in use generates an accurate count. All claims for reimbursement must be based on accurate daily meal counts taken, by category, at the point of service. The following is a list of UNACCEPTABLE meal count procedures: (1) meal counts taken at the beginning of the service line, unless you have been pre-approved for an alternate system by the State Agency; (2) attendance records; (3) tray or plate counts; (4) "backed out" systems that subtract one number (e.g., the number of free and reduced-price meals served) from the total meal counts to get another number (e.g., the number of paid meals served); (5) cash "backed out"; (6) meals not checked for all components, and (7) morning/classroom counts. IF YOU ARE DOING ANY OF THESE MEAL COUNT PROCEDURES, YOUR SYSTEM IS UNACCEPTABLE.

Question #3 - Daily counts for all serving lines, serving periods, etc. are correctly totaled and recorded. The person completing the On-site Reviews should observe how meal counts from various cashiers are combined and recorded for the daily report **after the end** of the meal service. To validate, the person observing, shall also obtain a count using the same procedure as the food service worker, e.g., counting tickets in a ticket system or counting check marks in a roster check off system. An automated system may be tested by manually performing some of the functions of the system.

Question #4 - The meal count reports submitted to the School Food Authority are accurate. Individual school meal counts, by category, are submitted to the School Food Authority on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. The particular daily recording method used must ensure that correct

counts by category are reported in a way that can be easily read, edited, and consolidated into an accurate monthly claim for reimbursement.

Question #5 - The monthly claim figures for the school matches the monthly claim figures on file for this school at the School Food Authority level. Evaluate the system by tracking the school's meal count totals by category through the process of reporting the counts to the School Food Authority. In addition, determine where the counts reported by the school were used by the School Food Authority in the consolidation of the Claim for Reimbursement.

Question #6 - The School Food Authority correctly performs "edit checks" (claim review process) prior to submitting claims to the State Agency. "Edit checks" are a means of internal control to ensure that an accurate claim for reimbursement has been made. Compare the meal counts by category to the number eligible, and also compare the meal counts by category to the number eligible times the attendance factor on a daily basis. If monitoring discloses problems with a school's meal counts, the School Food Authority must ensure that a corrective action plan is implemented and problems are resolved.

Question #7 - The system prevents overt identification. Eligibility information must never be publicized nor used in such a way that a students' eligibility category may be recognized by another student. Students receiving free or reduced-priced benefits must not, at any time, be treated differently from students who do not receive these benefits. SFAs are required to ensure that there is no physical segregation, discrimination, or overt identification of any student eligible for free or reduced-price benefits.